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THE MONKTON GAS PIPELINE: PHASES III AND IV, 1983-84

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The archaeological watching brief and excavations to which this report relates took place as the last of three phases, commenced in 1982. The work of that year was published as an interim report, and has appeared in *Arch. Cant.*, ci (1984), 83-114.

As in the previous years, the British Gas Corporation contacted the Kent Archaeological Rescue Unit before commencement of work. The task of monitoring the operation was passed to Dr F. Jenkins, F.S.A., at whose behest the writer carried the watching brief, assisted by members of the Thanet Archaeological Unit, and an excavation team from Kent Enterprise for Youth (Thanet). Valuable help in field-walking was given by volunteers from Thanet and Wantsum Relic Hunters Association. Thanks are due to the Gas Corporation, and to the contractors, Messrs. Press Ltd. and Peak Welders for their co-operation.

This phase of the pipeline began at N.G.R. TR 29546559, and terminated at N.G.R. TR 34506475, running close to the A253 except when the final leg diverted across the farmland to Clive Road (see Fig. 1). At all stages the pipeline paralleled that laid in 1971,¹ lying 3 m. south of it in most places. Initially, a broad band of topsoil was removed along the course of the pipeline. This demonstrated that the upper chalk lay close to the surface throughout the whole length. Unfortunately, a drift brickearth overburden up to 50 cm. deep remained in some places, making the detection of features almost impossible in the time available before trenching.

The excavation team commenced by walking the pipeline route, and followed up with an examination by trowelling, probe, and metal

¹ S.C. Hawkes *et al.*, 'The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Monkton, Thanet', *Arch. Cant.*, lxxxix (1974), 49-89.

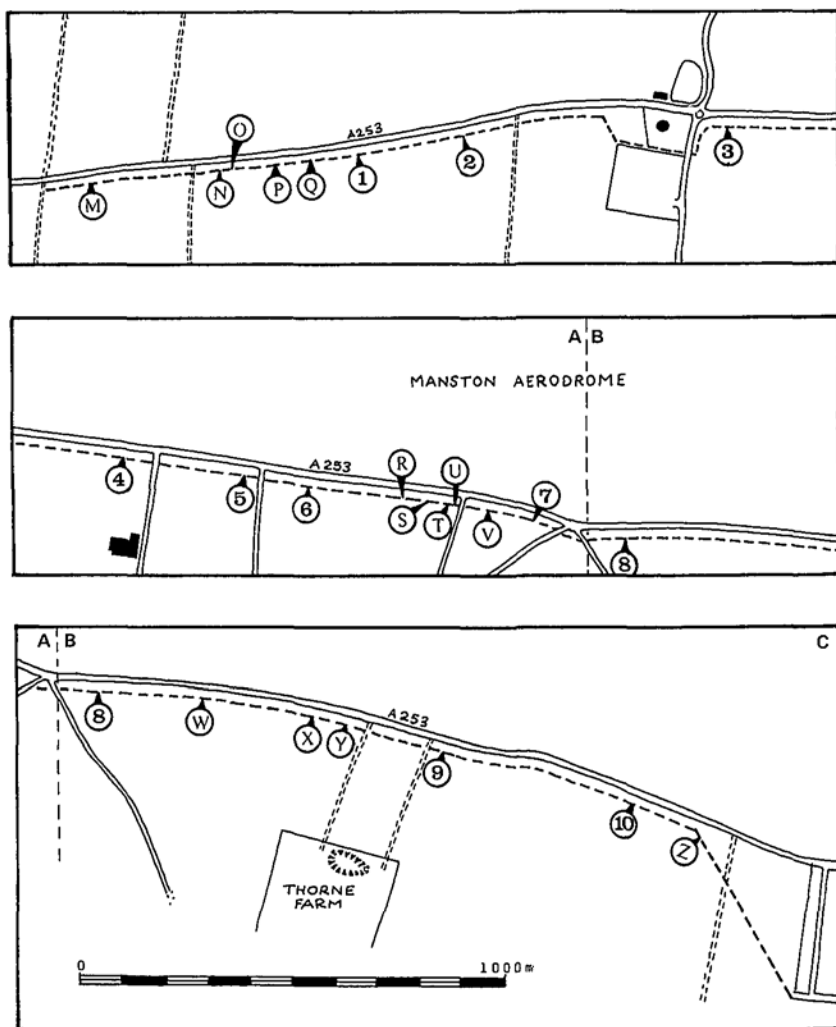


Fig. 1. The Route of the Gas Pipeline, Phases III (1983) and IV (1984).

detector. Features thus discovered are numbered, or lettered in continuation of the 1982 report, and their location is shown in Fig. 1. Human skeletal material from graves encountered is considered as an appendix.

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POINT M

Here the pipe trench cut a pit of half-round section, this measured 1.30 m. across, by 0.50 m. deep. The fill was of dark loam with chalk nodules. At about 20 cm. from the floor of the pit was a layer of shells consisting mainly of *Buccinum undatum*, a species of clam favouring muddy shores. Just above the layer, the loam held charcoal traces, waste flakes, animal bone and pot-sherds in a late-Neolithic fabric (see Fig. 7, 26).

POINT N

*Grave A.*² Length 2.50 m., width 0.65 m., depth 0.40 m., orientated NNE. The grave had two slots cut into the corners at the southern end, similar to Grave 26 encountered during Phase II, 1982. A characteristic 'finding' cut in the western edge, plus mounds of hard chalk silt on the floor of the grave were evidence of disturbance. Only a small fragment of long bone, and what appears to be two gall-stones were found (see Fig. 2, A.)

POINT O

Here a ditch of truncated V-form, running NW-SE, was cut by the pipe trench. It was c. 1.3 m. across by 0.95 m. deep. Only a few minutes were available to investigate this feature, but animal bones, shells, and some sherds of a coarse early Iron Age pot fabric were obtained.

POINT P

Grave B. This was cut by the pipe trench and only the north end and about 60 cm. survived. Orientation was roughly NE-SW. From what remained it is inferred that this was the grave of a child. The outline of a pelvis and femurs were observed in powdered bone. Sections X and Y indicate a disturbance at the foot. (See Fig. 2, b).

POINT Q

Grave C. Orientated 240° WSW. This grave had been disturbed in

² These graves are obviously unconnected with the Monkton cemetery which lies c. 1 km. to the west. They are given letters to distinguish them from the Thorne Farm burials.

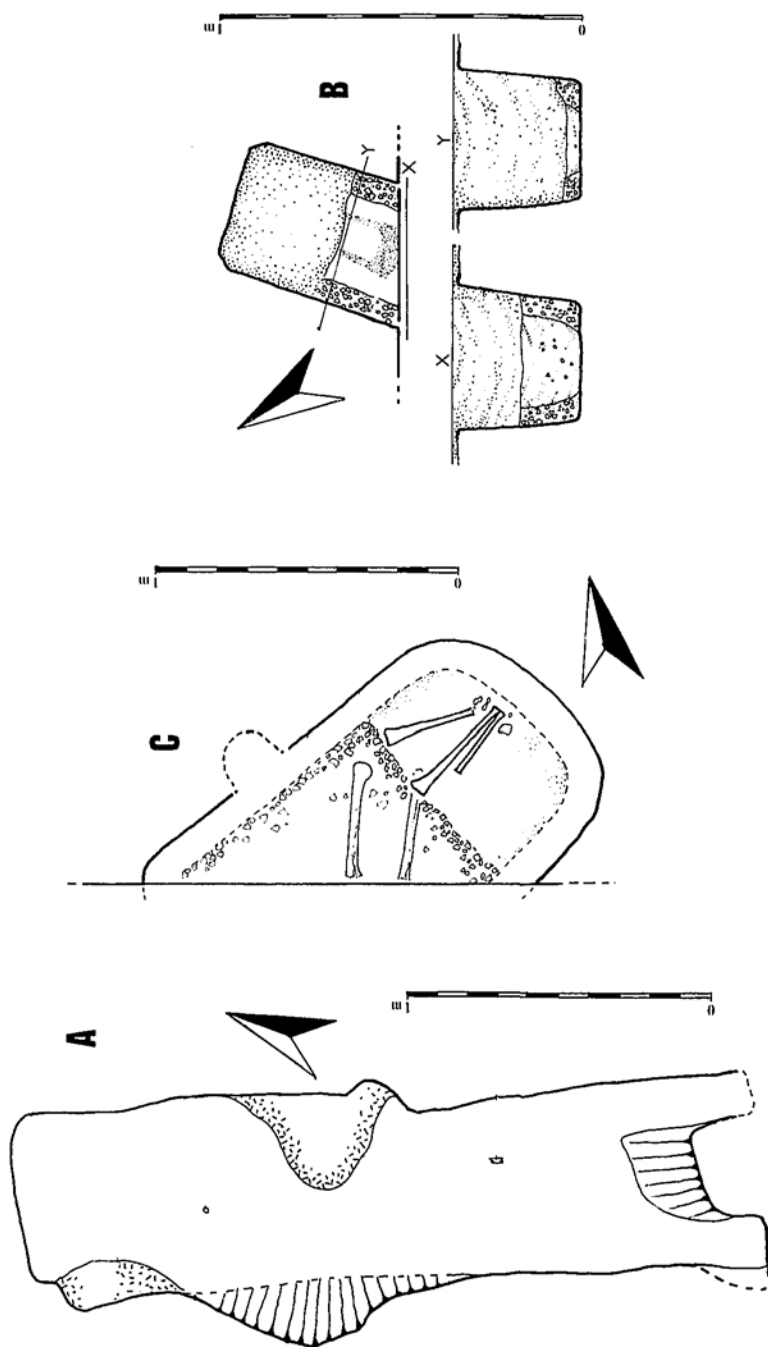


Fig. 2. Graves A, B and C.

antiquity, and part destroyed by the pipe trench and only fragmentary long bones of both legs remained. There was evidence of packing between the walls of the grave and a coffin, and a possible post hole (see Fig. 2, c). The grave seems to have been disturbed at the north end at a time when the bones of the legs were still articulated. Construction of the grave was precise, with well-cut vertical walls, as was the case with what remained of Grave B.

POINT R

A pit or chalk working about 5 m. across was observed in both faces of the pipe trench at this point. The depth of the feature is unknown since it descended below the floor of the trench (see Fig. 3, 1). The stratigraphy was as follows:

Layer 1, Modern topsoil (removed);

Layer 2, Dark-brown loam containing animal bone, shells, Romano-British pot-sherds.

Layer 3, An infill of discoloured chalk rubble.

Layer 4, A dark-brown loam with small chalk nodules. This contained Romano-British sherds and many fragments of daub, some pierced with round holes, perhaps the casts left by wattle.

The overall dating for the pottery from this feature would seem to be mid-second to third century.

POINT S

Here a ditch was observed passing obliquely across the line of the pipe trench, roughly from NW-SE. Where sectioned by the trench, it had apparently been recut (see Fig. 3, 3).

Stratigraphy:

A. Uniformly of light-brown loam and containing late-first to second-century Romano-British material;

B. Discoloured chalk rubble with pockets of dark earth, and medieval pot-sherds in late fourteenth-century styles and fabrics, with sixteenth-seventeenth century material in the brown loam above.

POINT T

This site was discovered by trowelling after a *dupondius* of Antoninus Pius had been found by metal detector. A foundation of rammed chalk was revealed. This was set with water-worn flints, and laid onto a flattened surface of the natural chalk. The foundation rose about 25 cm. above the chalk, and appeared to be truncated by modern

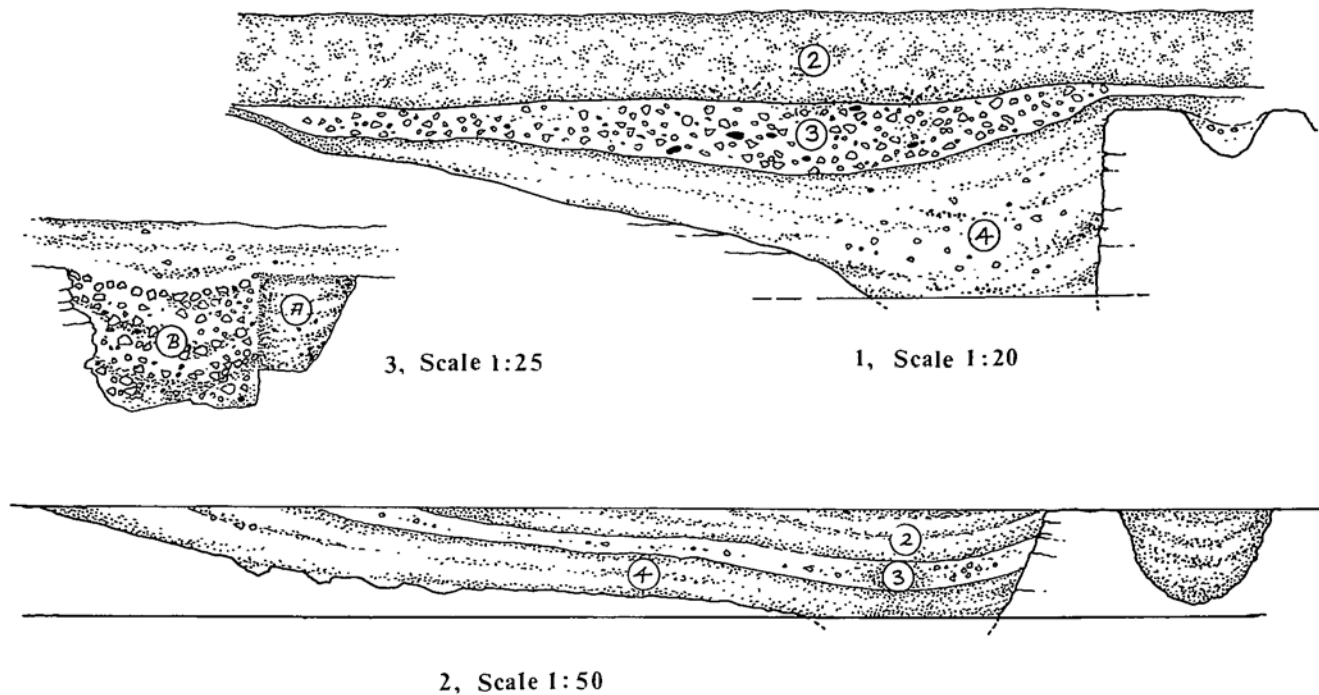


Fig. 3. 1. Section of Feature at Point R. 2. Section of Feature at Point U. 3. Section of Ditch at Point S.

ploughing. Just west of the foundation, the soil between the chalk and the modern topsoil contained sherds of Romano-British pottery in a variety of fabrics attributable to the mid- or late-third and fourth centuries. Two bronze pins are shown as Figs. 7, 18 and 7, 19.

POINT U

A large pit or working in the chalk was exposed in both faces of the pipe trench at this point (see Fig. 3, 2). It took the same form as the features at point R, but was over 10 m. across in this case. At the eastern end, it descended below the floor of the trench and could not be investigated further.

Stratigraphy:

1. Modern topsoil (removed);
2. Burnt earth with iron slag, pot-sherds, bones and shells;
3. A layer of discoloured chalk rubble changing to chalky brown loam at the deep east end, and containing material similar to layer 2;
4. Light-brown loam with a high chalk content except at the deep east end where the layer descends below the floor of the trench; finds were again similar to layer 2. A lead plum-bob, bronze pin, and bronze tweezers are shown as 21, 20, and 22 in Fig. 7.

The overall evidence from pottery from this feature seems to indicate late-second to mid-third century activity, and third-fourth century infilling.

POINT V

After a *potin* coin had been found by metal detector, the thin layer (15 cm.) of subsoil over natural chalk was examined by trowelling throughout this area. Romano-British pot-sherds in late-first to early-second century fabrics were grouped within a circular patch 80 cm. across. This was roughly centred on the find-spot of the coin.

POINT 8

Here, in an irregular patch about 7 m. across, was a layer of large closely-packed flints. From on and between these were obtained small pieces of iron slag, with sherds of Belgic and Romano-British pottery.

POINT W

An area of about 36 m. sq. in which the overburden contained an

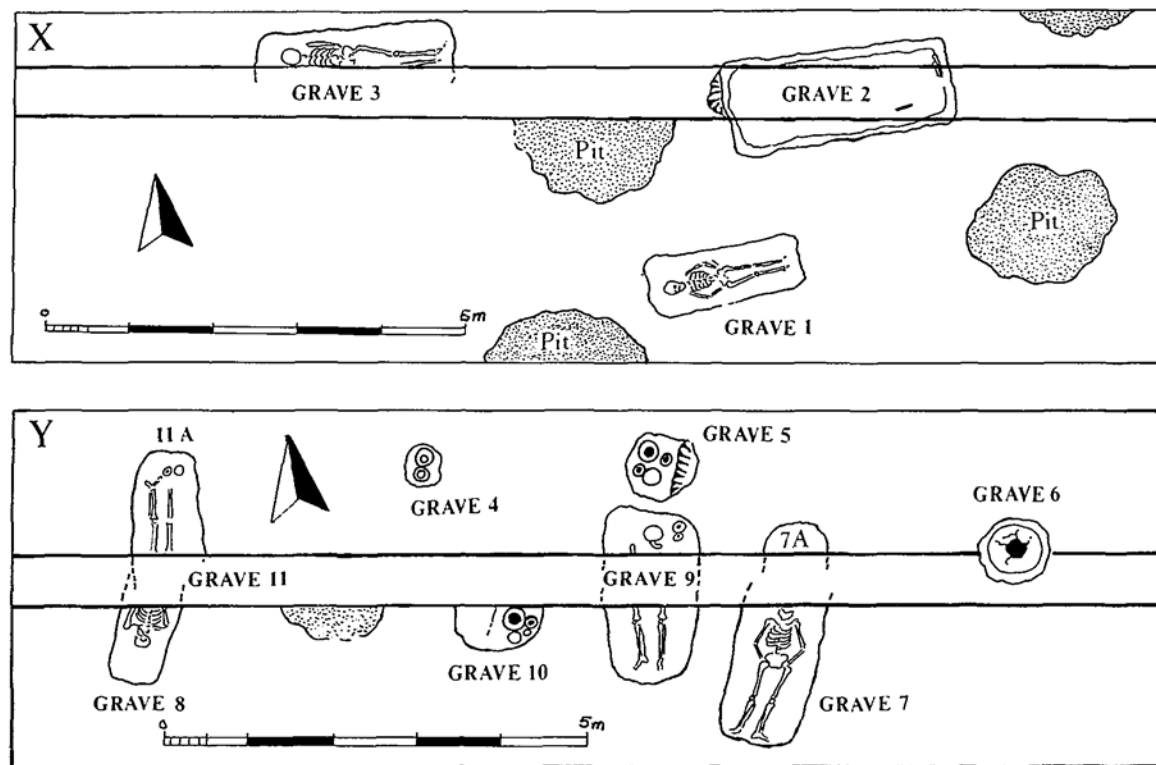


Fig. 4. Plans of Burials at Points X and Y.

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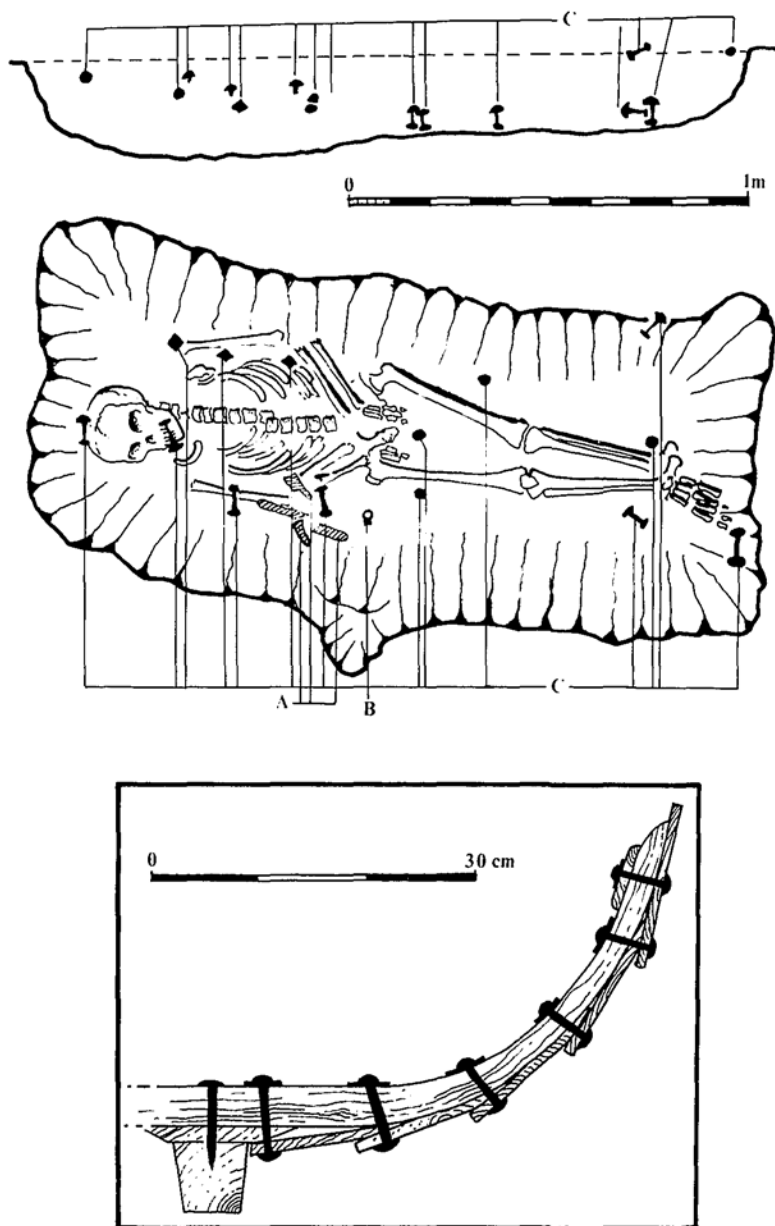


Fig. 5. 1. Plan and Section of Grave 1: A, Iron Knife Fragments; B, Bronze Buckle; C, Clench Bolts. Three clench bolts were found on the natural chalk surface c. 70 cm. beyond the head of the grave. 2. Reconstruction of how the clench bolts could have been used in the structure of a boat, showing angles taken by heads and plates.

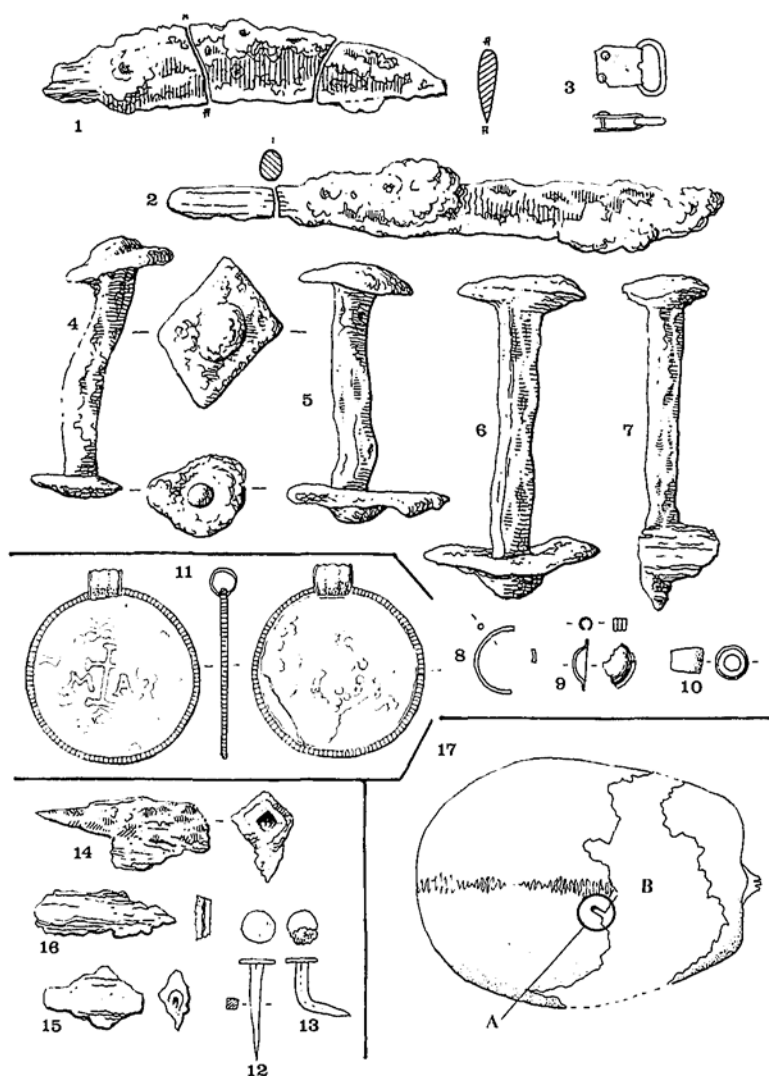


Fig. 6. Objects from Graves in the Thorne Farm Cemeteries. No. 11 (1/1); no. 17 (1/4) (A, undercut puncture, with nos. 14-16 below it; B, bone fragmented but *in situ*); all others (1/2).

abundance of burnt flint, shells, bones, and Iron Age sherds. A section revealed a number of shallow pits. Running through the area from north to south was a ditch of truncated V-form, c. 1.50 m. wide by 1.50 m. deep. Its fill held nothing in the way of finds.

The general area above Thorne Farm, commencing about 100 m. west of Point X, to about 200 m. east of Point Y.

Between these points, the exposed subsoil everywhere yielded burnt flint, shells, and pot-sherds in Early, Mid, and Late Iron Age fabrics. Shallow pits, from 30 cm. to 3 m. in diameter, were closely scattered along the whole length. The burials at points X and Y, were sunk through this horizon, and their fills contained much Iron Age material.

POINT X

A group of three graves was found here, one disturbed in antiquity (Grave 2) and two identifiable as Anglo-Saxon burials (see Fig. 4, (x)).

Grave 1

Length 1.83 m., width 0.82 m., depth 2.25 m., orientated 270° west, head west. The skeletal remains in poor condition are of a slightly-built person, aged between 12–15 years. Sex indeterminate. Fragments of two iron knives were found at the right elbow with a small bronze buckle (see Fig. 6, 1,2,3). Distributed throughout the grave fill and surrounding soil over chalk were eighteen iron 'clench bolts', having round domed heads, and flat lozenge shaped plates (see Fig. 6, 4, 5, 6, 7 for representative examples). All the bolts bear wood traces. The gap between heads and plates averaged 60 mm. As can be seen from the grave plan and section, Fig. 5, the bolts appear to have been components of a wooden object of larger dimensions than the chalk-cut grave. On the decay of the wood, the bolts had presumably sunk through the grave fill of loam until encountering a more solid stratum or object. As to the nature of the object, see discussion.

Grave 2

Length 2.74 m., width 1 m., depth 0.40 m., orientated 270° west. This well-cut grave had been disturbed, presumably in antiquity. Only long bone fragments (tibia and fibula) were found; they were parallel and high in fill.

Grave 3

Length 2.30 m., width unknown, depth 0.25 m., orientated c. 280° west, head west. This grave was discovered when sectioned by the pipe trench. The right arm, right rib-cage and femur were destroyed. Skeletal remains in good condition were those of a female aged about 25 years.

Under the jaw was found a bronze finger ring, silver hemispherical bead fragments, brown clay bead (see Fig. 6, 8, 9, 10) and glass-bead fragments.

During work on Graves 1 and 2, a small gold pendant brooch was found by metal detector in the topsoil spoil-heap, beside and south of the graves. Originally perhaps a coin, a Frankish *solidus*, it had been adapted by the fitting of a suspension band in the manner of a bracteate (see Appendix VI and Fig. 6, 11).

POINT Y

A group of Romano-British graves, cremations and inhumations (see Fig. 4 (Y)).

Grave 4 (Cremation burial).

The fragments of two urns in smooth grey ware, together with calcined bone, were found in a pit 35 cm. wide by 20 cm. deep (see Fig. 8, 1, 2). The carinated vessel contained only earth. Major portions of both pots were missing, so that the burial is presumed disturbed, rather than plough damaged.

Grave 5 (Cremation burial).

This burial group consisted of a large urn, (containing the ashes), small urn, dish and flagon (see Fig. 8, 3, 4, 5, 6). The group was contained in a flat-bottomed pit, 45 cm. across by 27 cm. deep. The calcined bone fragments suggested a child under 12 years. Two bronze nails were found in the ashes (see Fig. 6, 12, 13).

Grave 6 (Cremation burial)

This was contained within a large globular amphora, Dressel type 20. It had been inserted as a tight fit into a shaped cavity cut into chalk, with the broken upper edge of the pot above chalk level. No fragments of rim or handles were found. The calcined bones occupied only the lower 20 cm. of the amphora, and were intermixed with many iron fragments. Above this deposit, the fill of loam was layered with the bones of small rodents and amphibia, presumably entrapped over a long period. Examinations of the human bone fragments suggest that an adult and a very young child are represented.

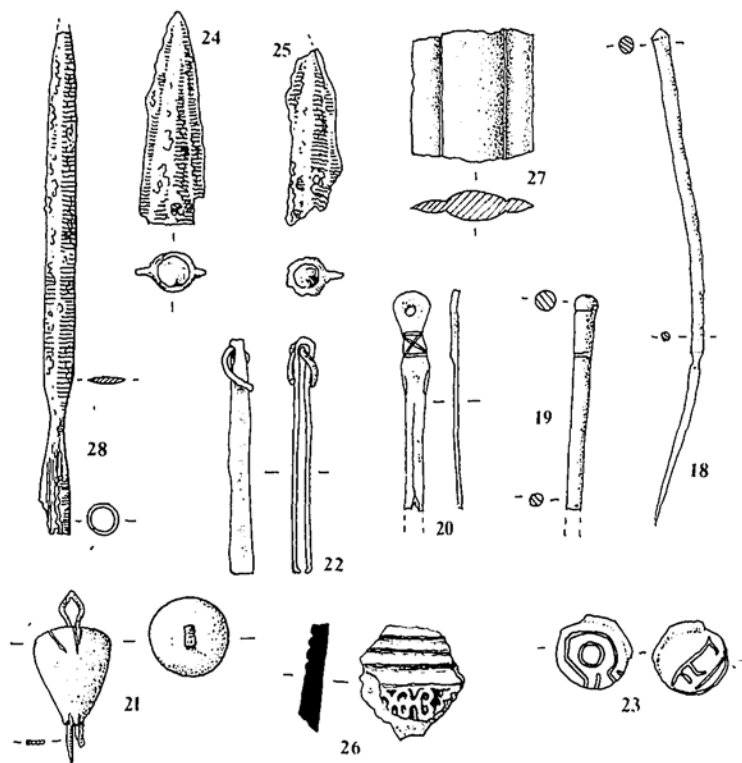


Fig. 7. Small Finds. No. 28 (1/6); all others (1/2).

Grave 7

Length not known, width 0.95 m., depth 0.40 m., orientated 15° north, head north. Grave cut by pipe trench, most of skull removed. The remains were those of a female aged 17–25 years. Fragments of iron nails down sides of grave. The chalk fill held human bone fragments unrelated to the burial, and a large rim sherd (see Fig. 8, 8).

Grave 8

Length unknown, width (at head) 0.65 cm., depth 0.60 m., orientated north-south, head south. Only the head end of the grave survived, the rest being either destroyed by the pipe trench, or by the cutting of Grave 11. Skeletal remains (skull, upper arms and rib-cage) of an adult aged c. 25 years.

Grave 9

Length 1.80 m., width 0.90 m., depth 0.60 m., orientated north-south, head north. Centre of grave cut by pipe trench, only lower legs and skull survived. Remains of an adult aged about 25 years. Two iron fragments and a piece of wood preserved by iron corrosion products were found within the skull (see Fig. 6, 14, 15, 16). The fragments were just within a possible entry wound situated 2 cm. to the right of the bregmatic ossicle (see Fig. 6, 17). There were nail fragments along the sides of the grave, and a flagon and a small pot were found just above the skull (See Fig. 8, 9, 10).

Grave 10 (Cremation burial)

A group comprising a large urn (containing the cremation), small urn, dish and flagon (see Fig. 8, 11, 12, 13, 14). A semi-circle of small iron fragments was plotted beside the largest vessel, running vertically for 20 cm., and having a diameter of 27 cm. There was sufficient gap for these fragments to have been bucket mounts.

Grave 11

Length unknown, width 0.80 m., depth 0.70 m., orientated north-south, head south. Head of grave destroyed by pipe trench, only pelvis and legs remaining. An adult female. Besides the feet were a plate and a small bottle-vase (see Fig. 8, 15, 16).

Grave 11A

Skeletal material found high in the fill of Grave 11, and not related to Grave 8. An adult.

POINT 9

A ditch of truncated V-form, c. 0.90 m. wide by 0.80 m. deep. This crosses the line of pipe trench in north-south direction, the fill of loam had worn. Romano-British sherds.

POINT 10

Grave 12

Length and width not known, depth 0.30 m., orientated east-west, head west. This grave was in brickearth, with the floor of the grave consisting of the natural chalk surface. It was sectioned longitudinally by the pipe trench, and much of the skeleton destroyed. Remains of a female aged 25-35 years.

POINT Z

For 10 m. on either side of this point, the pipe trench sectioned a buried horizon, and pits cut into the natural chalk, yielding a profusion of sherds, animal bone, shells, etc. An inspection of the surface on both sides of the pipe trench revealed the situation to obtain throughout the area of topsoil clearance at this point. Selected sherds are illustrated in Fig. 7.

Features reported during the 1971 pipeline excavation, with corresponding information from 1983. (Fig 1)

- Fig. 1, 1 Five graves found. Nothing observed in 1983.
- Fig. 1, 3 Three graves found. Nothing observed in 1983.
- Fig. 1, 4 Ditch with Early Iron Age material. Nothing observed in 1983.
- Fig. 1, 5 Ditch. Established as nineteenth-century feature, 1983.
- Fig. 1, 7 Slot or ditch. Two large pits observed, 1983.

SUMMARY

The 1983 and 1984 phases of the pipeline have confirmed and enlarged on the evidence of their predecessor of 1971. Graves at points N, P, Q and X reveal the existence of two more Anglo-Saxon cemeteries within the Isle of Thanet, perhaps associated with settlements at Hoo and Thorne respectively.

Some new light has been thrown on the extensive Romano-British site on the summit of the Down above Minster. A Neolithic site at point M, and evidence of Iron Age settlement at points X-Y, and Z, are new discoveries. Taken with Romano-British burials found above Minster early in this century, the graves at Thorne tend to reinforce the belief that 'Dunstrette' (the A253) dates at least to the first century. What is most surprising is the evidence of occupation during the Iron Age, of an area of thin topsoil on chalk downland. The paucity of finds and crop-marks in such areas of Thanet having previously indicated that prehistoric land-use favoured the brickearth valleys and shoreline, the downland being relegated to burial grounds, and perhaps grazing.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Of point M, it can be said that evidence of Late Neolithic occupation

in Thanet makes a welcome departure from the sparse indications (circular enclosure ditches and a burial) at the 'Lord of the Manor', Ramsgate. Certainly the area should be examined from the air when planted with cereals.

Graves A, B and C between points N and Q can be considered as likely to belong to a single cemetery. Five graves discovered during the 1971 pipe-line excavation, (1 in Fig. 1) may also be included. They were described as hurried burials without grave goods on N-S orientation.³ As to the period and identity of the cemetery, while no grave goods were found, orientation, grave structures, and disturbance in antiquity, all give weight to the belief that this is another of Thanet's Anglo-Saxon cemeteries. If so, it would probably be associated with a settlement on the old shoreline. In this context, Mrs. Sonia Chadwick Hawkes has drawn the writer's attention to Hoo, situated approximately 800 m. south of the graves. Certainly as an Anglo-Saxon place-name, it has a good pedigree.

By contrast, the Anglo-Saxon graves above Thorne Farm are fairly typical of burials encountered throughout the Thanet cemeteries. They can be confidently dated from the late-sixth to mid-seventh centuries. From the variety and quantity of the grave goods and associated finds, it can be inferred that the burials originate from a community of some affluence.

Of particular interest is the *solidus* found close to the graves, (see Appendix IV), and the iron clench bolts from Grave 1. The latter, although most uncommon, have been encountered before, and a not-too-convincing interpretation advanced.⁴ At first sight, the distribution of the bolts suggested that the grave had been covered by a large wooden door (see Fig. 5, 1). This could have served to separate the burial from the grave infill, which would be heaped upon it. After the decay of the door its constructional bolts would sink through the loam until arrested by a solid object such as bone, or the natural chalk surface. Against the foregoing, there are two objections. Firstly, the horizontal distribution of the bolts, and the distance, which varies considerably, between bolt plates, would make for a door of improbably large and robust dimensions. Secondly, as illustrated by Fig. 6, 4 and 5, the shafts of most of the clench bolts bend, and their heads and clench plates take extreme angles. These configurations are surely not compatible with the simple 'sandwich'

³ N. Macpherson-Grant, unpublished notes.

⁴ C. Roach Smith, 'Anglo-Saxon remains discovered at Ozingell, Kent', *Collectanea antiqua*, iii (1854), 17-8. It is therein suggested that such clench bolts were fittings for shields or bucklers. 'About twenty' clench bolts were reportedly taken from one grave at Ozingell. The wood-cut of one example indicates a shaft length of c. 5 cm.

structure of a planked door. As an alternative hypothesis, the writer suggests that the bolts were used to secure planking or strakes to the ribs of a boat. The way in which this would affect the shape of the bolts is shown in Fig. 5, 2). Either clinker- (shown) or carvel-build would result in the same necessary distortions.

Points R to U: The features described seem to form part of a fairly considerable industrial/settlement site. During the 1971 pipeline work, discoveries parallel to those listed herein were made. At the same time, arrester gear was installed at Manston Airfield adjacent to this point on the pipeline; again, pits, ditches, and evidence of both iron-working and settlement came to light,⁵ the whole site being in excess of 6 acres (c. 2.43 hectares). The ditch noted at point S is thought to extend onto the airfield. Features similar to those at points R and U have also been encountered at Romano-British sites at Drapers Mills, Margate, and the 'Lord of the Manor', Ramsgate. In all cases the sloping depression terminated in a sheer wall with a vertical shaft at its base, the infill containing burnt earth, iron slag, building materials, and midden refuse. As a chalk quarry for lime or marl the shape of such a pit makes little sense, so that perhaps they may have been some form of bloomery. The Romano-British cremation and inhumation burials at Point Y are similar to those previously discovered at Minster,⁶ with pottery groups being typical of the first to early-second century. Of interest is the dish (a waster) from Grave 5; this had been assumed to be of Upchurch ware. On specialist examination, it seems that the dish could be a local product (see pottery, Appendix III).

Finally, the Late Iron Age/Belgic remains at points X-Y and Z are surprising in terms of area and density, suggesting heavy and continuous settlement.

APPENDIX I

Small finds obtained from the exposed subsoil and upcast spoil banks

A piece of mid-ribbed blade in bronze, Fig. 7, 27. This was found in association with 15 unidentified bronze fragments, suggesting that a bronze hoard may have been ploughed off in the area. (Fig. 1, 6).

Two barbed iron projectile points with traces of wooden shafts,

⁵ This site seems to have been first discovered during an excavation by Professor W.F. Grimes at some time during World War II. The work is currently in process of publication.

⁶ W. Whiting, 'Roman Finds in Kent', *Antiq. Journ.*, iv (1924), 22-5.

(Fig. 7, 24, 25). They are probably arrow piles, and were found about 3 m. apart at (1) in Fig. 1.

An iron spearhead conforming in shape to Swanton's type E4.⁷ This was found at N.G.R. TR 288654 in topsoil spoil by a member of the public during the 1982 work, but only handed in at the time of writing (Fig. 7, 28).

Coins

Antoninus Pius (138–61). *Dupondius*. *Obv.* ANTONINVS AVG PIVS PP TR COS III, *r.* GENIO SENATVS S C. (From point T.)

Damaged small bronze, Constantius II ? Camp Gateway on reverse. Constantius II (337–61). Small bronze. DN CONSTANTIVS PF AVG FEL TEMP REPARATIO. Trier.

Constantine I (307–37). Small bronze. CONSTANTINOPOLIS.

Valens (364–78). Small bronze. DN VALENS PF AVG.

Valentinian II (375–92). *Siliqua*, much worn, Victory advancing on reverse.

Bronze *Minim* []TIVS PF. 'Falling Horseman' reverse.

Potin. From Point V (see Fig. 7, 23).

APPENDIX II

Human Skeletal material

Grave A. Only bone fragments and what appears to be a gall-stone.

Grave B. Fragmentary long bones of both legs, an adult.

Grave C. Powdered bone on floor of grave formed an 'image' of pelvic area and femurs. Dimensions of 'image' indicate a child.

Grave 1. The skeletal remains in poor condition of a slightly built person, aged between 12–15 years. Stature estimated at 5 ft. 1 in. (155 cm.). Sex was indeterminate, since pelvic evidence (bone fragmentary) suggested female, while skull had male features.

Grave 2. Only fragments of long bones (tibia and fibula) found, these of adult dimensions.

Grave 3. Skeletal remains in good condition were those of a female aged about 25 years, stature estimated at 5 ft. 6 in. (168 cm.).

⁷ M. J. Swanton, *The Spearheads of the Anglo-Saxon Settlements* (1973), 14, 15.

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Grave 5. A cremation burial. It was observed that the epiphyses were not united in surviving long bone fragments.

Grave 6. A cremation burial. While most of the calcined bone was obviously derived from an adult, a major fragment of humerus was only 82 mm. long by 6 mm. wide. Pre-natal remains, or those of a very young child, are therefore inferred.

Grave 7. The remains were those of a female aged 17 to 25 years, stature estimated at 170 cm. (5 ft. 7 in.).

Grave 8. Skeletal remains (skull, upper arms and rib-cage) of an adult aged c. 25 years. Skull morphology suggests male.

Grave 9. This grave was cut by the pipe trench, only lower legs and skull surviving. Remains of an adult aged about 25 years, skull morphology suggests male. What could be components of a projectile point were discovered in the soil content of the cranium. (see Fig. 6, 14, 15, 16). The fragments were just within a possible entry wound situated 2 cm. to the right of the bregmatic ossicle (see Fig. 6, 17).

Grave 11. This grave was cut by the pipe trench, destroying everything above the pelvis. Pelvic morphology suggests a female, stature estimated at 149 cm. (4 ft. 10¾ in.).

Grave 11A. Skeletal material unrelated to either Graves 8 or 11, found high in the fill of Grave 11. An adult, stature estimated at 172 cm., (5 ft. 7¾ in.); the mandible lacked teeth.

Grave 12. Grave cut by pipe trench and remaining bone very fragmentary. Remains of a female aged 25 to 35 years.

APPENDIX III

The numbers in brackets which follow all refer to pottery illustrated in Figs. 8–10.

Points O, R, S, T, U and V.

Pottery evidence from these sites was such as to allow identification by style and fabric, but not such as to merit illustration or description.

Point 8

(21) Oxfordshire ware red colour-coated bowl with rouletted

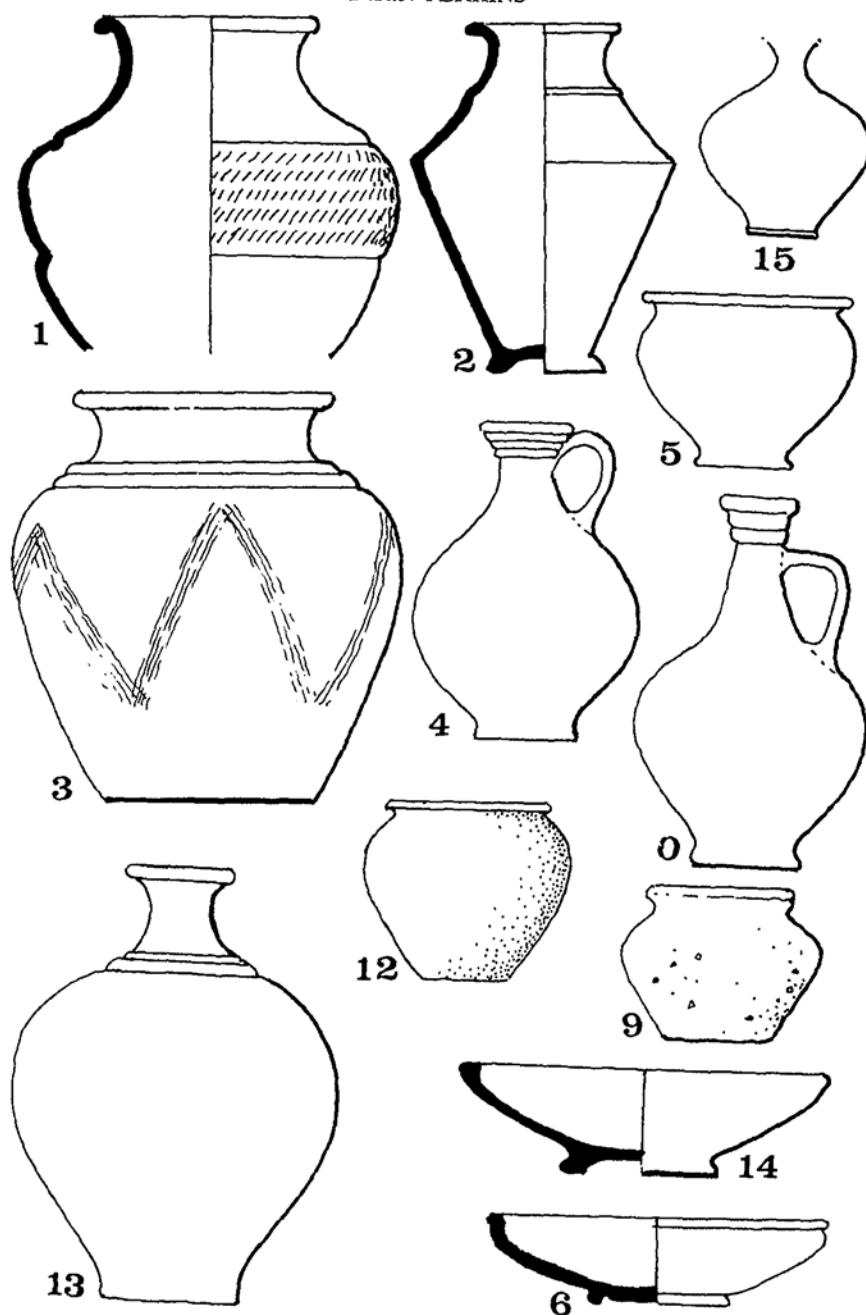


Fig. 8. Pottery from the Romano-British Graves at Thorne Farm ($\frac{1}{4}$).

decoration. This is similar to Form C77.4 (Fig. 62) and Decoration C78.11 (Fig. 63) in C. J. Young, *Oxfordshire Roman Pottery*, BAR 43, 1977. Date range A.D. 340–400. Late Romano-British grog-tempered ware: (17) and (20) are jars, (18) and (19) are flange-rimmed bowls.

Point W

(22) (23) (24) All are jars in late-Saxon Canterbury sandy ware. One body sherd appears to have been stamp-decorated. Date range c. A.D. 975–1025. (26) Rim sherd from large shouldered jar with external surface medium burnish, flint-tempered, early Iron Age, perhaps 800–650 B.C. (27) Small bowl with additional crushed shell added to normal flint temper. (28) body sherd from 'wall sided' bowl with incipient shoulder, flint-tempered. A body sherd from a large jar (not illustrated) had pronounced rustication.

Point Z

(31) Jar with rough comb decoration in late Iron Age flint-tempered ware. (32) Jar with corrugated shoulder and foot-ring, Belgic grog-tempered fabric with sparse flint grits. (33) Base in Belgic fine sandy ware with sparse flint grits. (34) Jar with vertical comb decoration on shoulder below two applied cordons, Belgic fine sandy ware. (36) Jar with curving inverted rim and fairly strong inner lip, and (37) jar, both in late Iron Age flint-tempered ware.

Pottery from the Romano-British cemetery at Thorne

Grave 4

(1) Beaker with roulette-decorated body panel; (2) carinated beaker, both in smooth grey ware. (For these and other vessels of the same fabric mentioned in this section, see the note by J. Monaghan below).

Grave 5

(3) Jar, native, essentially Belgic but Romanising, grog-tempered with moderate stone and flint grits. Rough-tooled chevron decoration below to very irregular horizontal shoulder grooves. (4) Flagon, ring-necked with three ribbed strap-handle, pink/buff sandy ware, Canterbury district; (5) Small beaker; (6) Dish, both in smooth grey ware.

Grave 6

Large globular amphora, Dressel type 20.

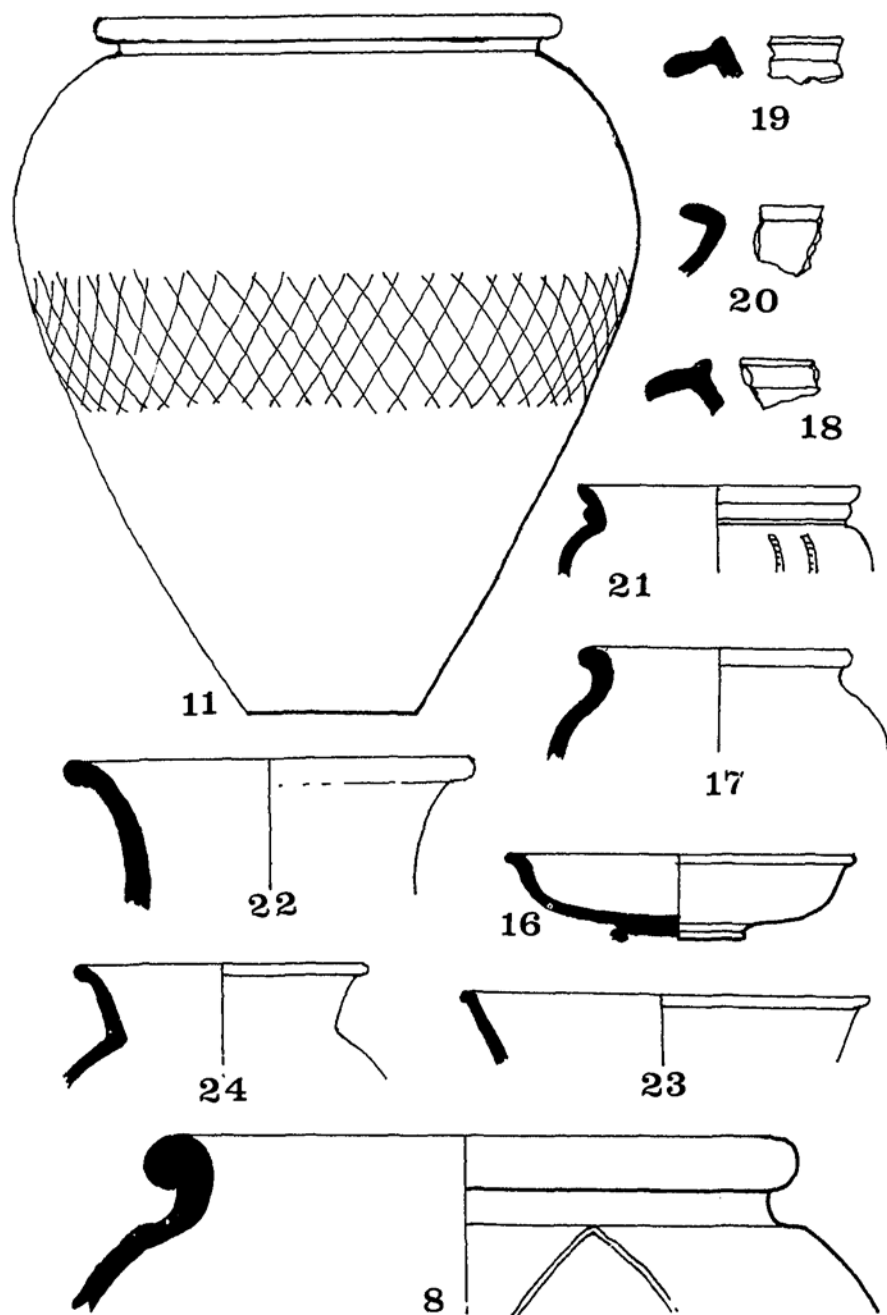


Fig. 9. Pottery from Point Z ($\frac{1}{4}$).

THE MONKTON GAS PIPELINE

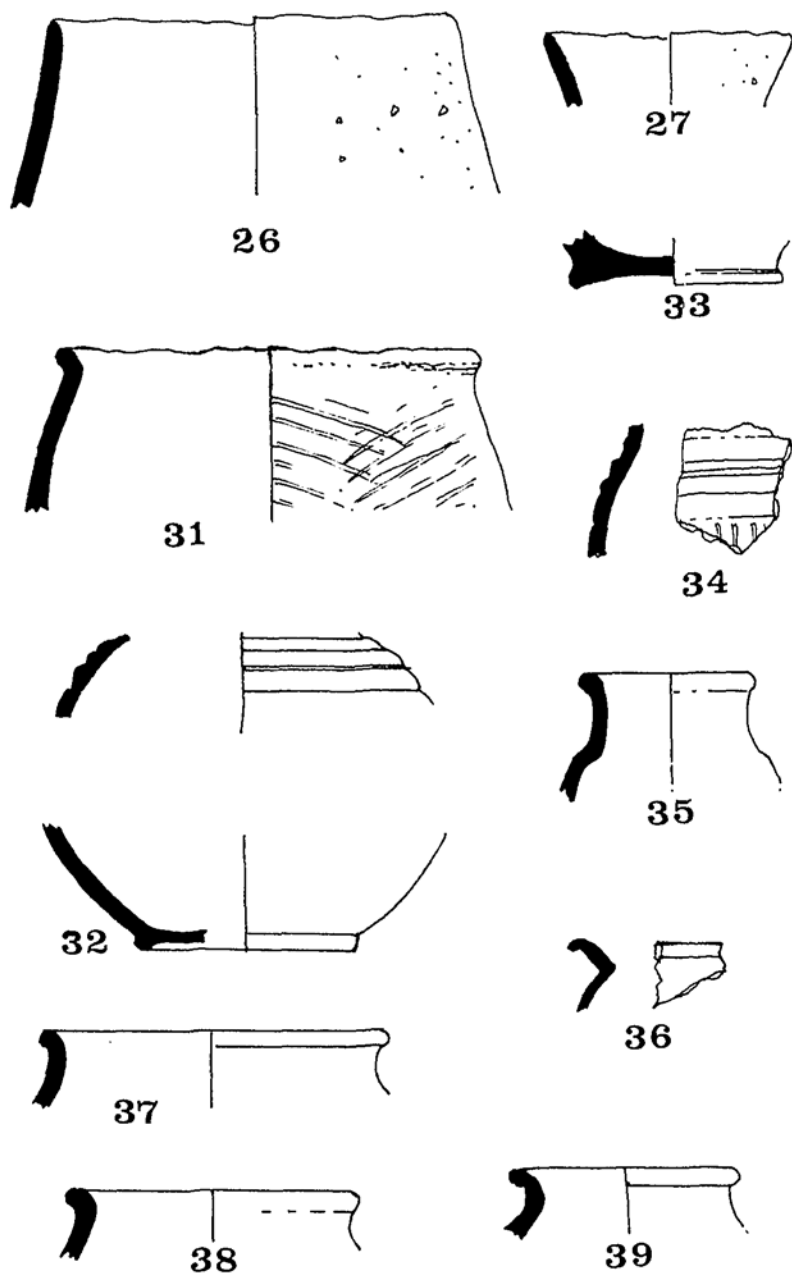


Fig. 10. Pottery from Points W and Z ($\frac{1}{2}$).

Grave 7

(8) Belgic storage jar, spaced cross-hatching, residual.

Grave 9

Small beaker or jar in soft grog tempered fabric, occasional stone grits, (small) and light external burnish. (10) Flagon with ring-neck and narrow two-ribbed strap-handle in off-white fine sandy ware. Fabric has sparse red-brown ironstone grits.

Grave 10

(11) Large jar in grey finely sanded BB2 ware; (12) Small beaker in light-grey Canterbury type sandy ware; (13) Bottle – vase in smooth grey ware; (14) Red slip dish, unsigned fine ware copy, 'second'.

Grave 11

(15) Bottle – vase in smooth grey ware; (16) Dish in smooth grey ware, but unlike others in this section the fabric was slightly sandy. Marked internal wear.

Note on the smooth grey ware pottery from the Thorne Farm site

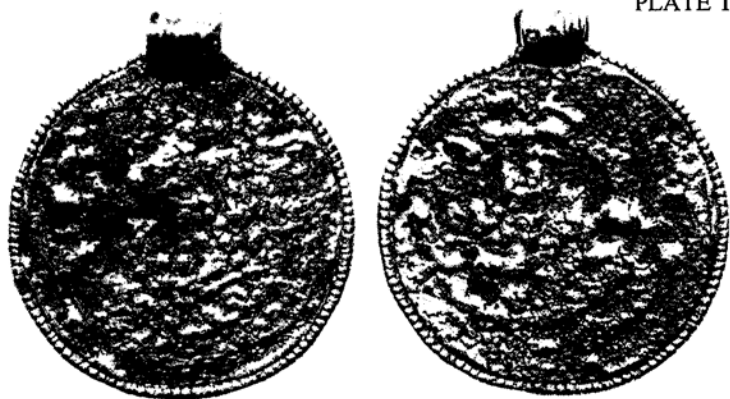
The pottery vessels examined included several of types normally found on the Upchurch Marshes. On close inspection they showed significant differences to the usual Upchurch fabrics. Although generally analogous to fabric I (N1/1bs), which is rich in iron granules, the pottery is much lighter in colour and tends to be buff in sections. It is possible that a pottery industry existed on the south bank of the Wantsum Channel for a short period, perhaps A.D. 60–90. The discovery of an imitation Gallo-Belgic platter in this fabric (with numerous blisters) at Thorne Farm tends to confirm this suggestion. Vessels of Upchurch type in similar non-Upchurch fabrics are to be found at Richborough.

Jason Monaghan.

APPENDIX IV

A seventh-century looped solidus from the Isle of Thanet

From Thorne Farm cemetery (N.G.R. TR 334654), about a mile and a half east of Minster, the Isle of Thanet Archaeological Unit have recorded the discovery in 1984 of an imitative gold *solidus*, framed in beading and looped (Fig. 6, 11., Plate I). It was found by an unauthorised prospector on the site, who turned his discovery over to



A seventh-century looped *Solidus* ($\times 2$).

the proper authorities somewhat reluctantly. Presumably the object was associated with a burial, but this cannot now be established with certainty.

On the obverse can be seen traces of a head facing right, while on the reverse there is a monumental cross within a wreath-like border of bold dots. The cross is flanked by the letters M A, which are the mint-signature of Marseilles. The object (we hesitate to call it a coin) is thus referred to a well-known series of late sixth- and seventh-century gold *solidi* from southern Gaul,⁸ examples of which have been found elsewhere in England, almost always looped for suspension on a necklace like the recent Thanet find, and mostly from burials.

There were two main denominations of Dark Age gold coinage, namely the *solidus* and its third, the *tremissis*. *Solidi* are relatively uncommon as finds in England, and almost all of them fall into one of two categories. Nearly half the finds are late-Roman or Byzantine coins of the fifth to early seventh century and nearly half are Massiliote coins of the type recorded here, or closely related issues with the mint signature A R, from the nearby mint of Arles.

There are in all 13 Provençal *solidi* with English provenances (Rigold⁹ nos. 50, 52-4, 54a, 55-62) including two that cannot be

⁸ S. E. Rigold, 'An Imperial Coinage in southern Gaul in the sixth and seventh Centuries?' *Num. Chron.*, xiv (1954), 93-133.

⁹ S. E. Rigold, 'The Sutton Hoo Coins in the Light of the contemporary Background of Coinage in England, in R. Bruce Mitford *et al.*, *The Sutton Hoo Ship Burial*, i (1975), 653-77.

located any more exactly within England. Of 11 for which the find-spot is recorded, no fewer than 7 are from east Kent. The outliers are from the Thames estuary (Rainham, Essex/Gr. London), from the Norfolk coast between Bacton and Mundesley, from Oxford (Boar's Hill), and from Balderton (Notts.). Four of the Kentish finds were found as the ornaments of a single necklace in a grave at Sarre,³ only about five miles west of the Thorne Farm site. *Solidi* from Rainham and Finglesham are also grave-finds, and some of the others may very well have been, although their contexts are not properly recorded. It can be seen, then, that the Thorne Farm *solidus* falls neatly into place as a member of a well-evidenced class of finds.

It is a late member of that class. Its pale colour suggests a degree of debasement (perhaps about one-third gold, alloyed almost entirely with silver?) which the coinage of Gaul and England reached only in the third quarter of the seventh century. As the debasement of the coinage proceeded throughout the seventh century, it tended to be fairly consistent in any one decade, and there is a presumption that jewellery kept in step with the coinage. It is improbable, therefore, that the Thorne Farm *solidus* was made before about the middle of the century. It would be desirable, when a suitable opportunity occurs, to analyse the metal in order to see how closely the alloy of the beading and of the loop correspond with the medallion.

The particular interest of the find is that the 'coin' seems to be an imitation. It is apparently struck rather than cast, although it is difficult to form a definite opinion of that point when the edge of the flan cannot be examined. The reverse, in particular, is off-centre in relation to the flan. If the dies were ever presentable (which one may doubt) they are seen here in the ultimate stages of decay. All one can think is that they were made from very inferior metal, the weaknesses and cavities in which were revealed in use, in the form of bulbous die-flaws. Even if they were in a clean, fresh state the impression would be close in style to the prototype. In the entire corpus of published specimens there is nothing as decrepit as this. In the later (Merovingian) part of the series, in which its alloy locates this example, the bust and the circle of dots tended to be much larger than they were originally. The circle on the Thorne Farm find is small. Its weight, too (4.58 g. with beading and loop), is a little higher than one would expect in the second half of the seventh century, although not

¹⁰ C. Roach Smith, 'On Anglo-Saxon Remains discovered recently in various Places in Kent, *Arch. Cant.*, iii (1860), 35-46 and Pl. II.

impossibly so – there is a looped coin of Chlotar II from east Kent weighing 4.66 g.¹¹

In the outer border above the cross there is a zig-zag of pseudo-lettering representing the legend, and this is a strong reason to think of the object as imitative.

It may well be that the strokes terminating in pellets on the obverse in front of the face, and in the margin behind it, are part of the die-cutter's original efforts. They are certainly inappropriate to the design being copied. Whatever the technique of manufacture, the overall effect is deplorable. Can this object have had an acceptably antique, 'heirloom' appearance to a late-seventh century Kentish eye? New, competently made coins were available in Kent at the date when (almost certainly) it was made. Admittedly, they were all *tremisses*. If a *solidus* on one's necklace was socially *de rigueur* in a certain class of society, there could have been a commercially exploitable demand for imitations several decades after the originals ceased to be available. The taste must have been artificial, if it could be satisfied by this example. It was also a conservative taste, reflecting a tradition of half a century or more.

The possibility remains that the Thorne Farm find is Frisian in origin. Unless very close parallels of Continental provenance can be adduced, however, it seems better to regard it as English.

D.N. Metcalf

¹¹ S. C. Hawkes *et al.*, 'X-ray fluorescent Analysis of some Dark Age Coins and Jewellery', *Archaeometry*, ix (1966), 98–138, item L. 11 = Rigold 60; but F.1 weighs only 3.84 gr., which is about the average weight of the later coins when unmounted.

